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COUNTRY Germany (Eastern Zone)

SUBJECT Political Deficiencies and Requirements
of the HVA Training Program

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Note: [redacted] dealt with the military training of the first training phase of HVA troops. The present report centers attention on the political training in the second training phase and the political requirements for the third phase. The report emphasizes the overriding importance assigned to political indoctrination in the East Zone paramilitary forces.

1. An order published by the NVA and signed by its chief, General Heinz Hoffman, and its chief political officer, General Dölling, is particularly concerned with the political indoctrination of the East Zone paramilitary forces. Extracts from the order read as follows (in order to retain the tenor of the document the translation has been made as literal as possible).
2. The political education of a considerable number of Volkspolizei (VP) members is limited, to a large extent, to book-learning and does not enable the men to draw practical conclusions from the political lectures. Numerous VP members do not feel a sense of personal attachment in the development of the DDR and are not taking an active part in it.
3. Members of all ranks have insufficient familiarity with the biographies of the great teachers of the German workers, Marx, Engels, Thaelmann, and Wilhelm Pieck, and with economic and political conditions in the DDR. Questions relating to the national struggle in Germany are not adequately discussed and the roles of rightist leaders as agents of American and German imperialism are not clearly pointed out.
4. The improvement of the political - ideological level of the officers is proceeding at too slow a rate. Many of them cover up their reluctance to improve their own political qualifications by excuses of overwork, deadlines, etc.
5. One hundred per cent. attendance of all VP members at political lectures has still not been achieved, particularly among officers, staff members, and technical maintenance personnel.

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6. The main reasons for these deficiencies and weaknesses are: a large group of the officers still suffers from the erroneous concept that the political - morale education is the special task of the political commissar instead of all the officers. Specialized lectures still suffer from insufficient political orientation and are delivered straight from the manuals instead of being related to political, social and economic events. Political problems are being explained incompletely, in part even incorrectly, and almost without the use of illustrative materials. VPD leadership fails to inquire into the qualifications of lecturers and group discussion leaders, many of whom do not possess sufficient political training. Often the Polit-Kultur (P-K) sections fail to carry out methodic seminars on each theme to be discussed and allow lecturers to carry out their assignment without preparation.
7. The P-K sections do not exploit fully the possibility of calling on well-known activists, scientists and artists to give talks in the VPD, and organize visits to factories and by other methods to acquaint VP members with the culture and success of the DDR, combining political indoctrination with practical aspects of the training.
8. Some of the VPD commanders have shown no respect for the political program. For example, Kommandeur Bertow of VPD 1556 interrupted a scheduled political lecture because he wanted to give a technical demonstration to his men instead. The leader of the summer camp at VPD 1344 removed a platoon in the middle of a political lecture because he wanted them to peel potatoes.
9. Commanding officers do not exert enough pressure on or give sufficient incentive to officers to continue their own political education and their progress is not guided and controlled. VPD commanders are making little effort to achieve a 100 per cent. attendance at political instructions and permit guard duty and details to interfere with the political program. They do not supervise the lectures sufficiently.
10. In order to reach the training goal of the current training year, DVA headquarters issued the following order:
 - a. The deficiencies noted in the second training phase are to be corrected by 20 September 1951.
 - b. The third training phase will start on 1 August 1951 and terminate on 15 November 1951. In the period from 16 November to 30 November 1951, final examinations and general inspections will be held to determine the results achieved during the training year.
 - c. Immediate training goals will be: a more thorough knowledge of political affairs as a basis for the successful completion of the training program, particularly in the case of officers; a tightening of discipline and securing of combat readiness for the DDR, the interests of the working class and the German people.
11. Weaknesses in the political indoctrination of VP members are to be eliminated during the political education program of the third training phase. The enlisted personnel's comprehension of the meaning of imperialism, of Lenin's doctrine of a just and unjust war, and of the forms and methods of the class struggle in the DDR must be deepened by emphasizing the success of reconstruction and the great opportunities of working people in the DDR.
12. One of the most important aims will be the securing of better qualified and better prepared seminar and discussion leaders. All former discussion leaders are to be re-appraised and will require re-appointment by the P-K chief. New group discussion leaders are to be chosen from among the politically best qualified VP members who are members and candidates of the SED. These men must be exempted from other duties so that they can receive four hours of instruction a week on the subject of lecture preparation. Hereafter, any seminar and group discussion leaders who come to their lectures unprepared will not be admitted to the class and will be subject to disciplinary action.

13. The P-K sections will organize a variety of cultural programs designed to acquaint all VP members with life in the DDR.
14. In order to obtain 100 per cent. participation of all VP members at the political courses and in order to improve the Marxist-Leninist indoctrination of the officers, the political program is to be held on regularly set days simultaneously for officers, officer candidates, non-commissioned officers and enlisted men. On those days, only work which is absolutely essential and cannot be postponed will be carried out, and then only by special permission of the VPD commander or his P-K deputy. Officers will be formed in seminar groups for self-study. Attendance is obligatory. Leaders of lower units will be responsible for the political qualification of their subordinate officers. The P-K sections will organize an effective inspection of the political program, will call for criticism of the lectures and have any weaknesses eliminated at once. Only the commanding officer of the VPD and the chief of the P-K section may in an exceptional case exempt members from attendance at this training. In order to improve their training, all officers will be required to hand in homework consisting of one problem per month. All staff officers will carry out one staff exercise per month.

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